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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (10 Apr 67) FOR OT

18 April 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Combat After Action Report, Operation Robin (U)

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

Forwarded as inclosure is a Combat After Action Report for Operation Robin. Operation Robin was conducted by the 173d Airborne Brigade during the period of 10-17 October 1966. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations, and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

KENNETH G. WICKHAM  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)  
APO San Francisco 96250

AVBE-SC

15 December 1966

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report

THRU: Commanding General  
II FFORCEV  
ATTN: G-3 D&T  
APO San Francisco 96227

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff  
For Force Development  
Department of the Army  
Washington D. C. 20310

The following report is submitted in accordance with MACV Directive Number 335-8.

1. General: At 1000 hours, on 10 October 1966, the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) moved into security positions, protecting Highway 15 from Bear Cat to Phu My. This was done with the 1/11th ACR in the north and the 1/503d Infantry in the south. The 1st Australian Task Force covered the rest of the highway into Vung Tau. The purpose of this operation, named "Robin", was to secure the movement of the 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry from their land point at Vung Tau, to their new base camp at Bear Cat. This was another in a long line of security missions that the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) has performed for new incoming units since it has been in Vietnam.

2. Name of Operation: Operation "Robin"

3. References: Maps Vietnam, 1:50,000 sheets 6342I & II - 6343I & II - 6442III & IV - 6443III & IV.

4. Type of Operation: Highway and Convoy Security

5. Date of Operation: 10 October 1966 to 17 October 1966/OPORD 20 - 66,  
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6. Location: Bien Hoa Province, along Highway 15 from Bear Cat to Phu My.
7. Command Headquarters: 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate)
8. Reporting Officer: Major General Paul F. Smith
9. Task Force Organization:

a. TF 1/503d Inf - LTC GOAD, Commanding

1/503d Inf  
1 Platoon E/17th Cav  
2 Platoon D/16th Armor  
C/3/319th Arty  
3 Engineer Demolition Teams  
1 Squad MP's  
2 National Policeman

b. TF 1/11th ACR - LTC HOWELL, Commanding

1/11th ACR  
1 Squad MP's

c. TF HHC (-) - MAJ SUTTON, Commanding

E/17th Cav (-)  
HHC (-)  
MP Plt (-)  
H & S Btry, 3/319th Arty  
Engineer Water Section

d. C/2/35th Arty - 1LT GERDER, Commanding

10. Supporting Forces:

- a. USAF: Air cover for the movement of convoys along Highway 15 was provided by the 7th USAF. It involved 16 escort sorties. No other missions were flown.

b. Army Aviation:

(1) Size of Force:

- (a) 335th Aviation Company (AML) (UH-1)
- (b) 173d Aviation Platoon (UH-1 & CH-13)
- (c) 145th Aviation Battalion (Combat) (O1-F)

(2) How and When Employed:

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- (a) Combat Assault . . . . . 120
- (b) Armed Helicopter . . . . . 126
- (c) Combat Resupply . . . . . 154
- (d) Command and Control . . . . . 69
- (e) Reconnaissance . . . . . 96
- (f) Medical Evacuation . . . . . 4
- (g) Artillery Adjustment . . . . . 32
- (h) Long Range Patrol . . . . . 28
- (i) Convoy Coverage . . . . . 26
- (j) Search & Rescue . . . . . 2
- (k) Miscellaneous . . . . . 228

(3) Summary of Aviation Activities:

(a) During Operation "Robin" this Brigade was supported primarily by the 335th Aviation Company and the 173d Aviation Platoon, augmented by the 145th Aviation Battalion (Combat) who provided one (1) O1-F Bird Dog aircraft for Artillery Adjustment on a daily basis. Aircraft from the 335th Aviation Company had a variety of missions ranging from Combat Assaults of C/2/503d Infantry to search and rescue of unidentified aircraft.

(b) Since the primary mission of this Brigade was to secure Highway 15, aviation support was to be kept to an absolute minimum.

(c) On October 15, an aircraft (OH-13S 64-15416) returning to Bien Hoa after completing a mission with 1/503d Inf, carrying one passenger, struck a powerline located at YT 056085; the aircraft was totally destroyed, pilot and passenger were killed.

(d) During Operation "Robin", aircraft transported 1,146 passengers, 22.1 tons of cargo and flew 396.1 hours.

(e) Ammunition expended:

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7.62 . . . . . 27,230 rounds  
2.75 . . . . . 98 rounds  
40mm . . . . . 100 rounds

c. Artillery:

(1) Size of Force:

- (a) C/3/319th Arty - six (6) guns 105mm towed
- (b) C/2/35th Arty - six (6) guns 155mm SP
- (c) How/1/11th ACR - six (6) guns 105mm SP

(2) How and When Employed: All missions fired were for registration. There were no fire missions of any type.

II. Intelligence:

a. Enemy Situation Before Operation: The operational area was believed to contain guerrilla units of squad and platoon size. In Long Thanh District of Bien Hoa Province, a VC District Committee with one subordinate platoon and the C280th Platoon were known to exist. There were eight hamlets, or villages, which were known to have VC committees. The C195th Guerrilla Platoon was believed to be operating in Nhon Trauch. In the mountainous area east of Highway 15, in Phouc Tuy Province, VC units of company and battalion size had been reported frequently. The 274th VC Main Force Regiment of the 5th VC MF Division was not believed to be operation in the Hot Dich area, although the area is known to be a base area for the regiment.

b. Enemy Situation During Operation: Twelve contacts were made with VC forces, ten of which were VC initiated. The largest VC force contacted was less than squad size. No documents or overlays of any significance were captured. US aircraft in support of the two-battalion size operation flew a total of 22 visual reconnaissance missions, receiving no ground fire.

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c. Area of Operations:

(1) Weather: The climate within the AO was typical of tropic zones affected by monsoons. Winds were gentle to moderate, with some strong gusts during periods of heavy rain. Rainfall was normal for the time of year, occurring mainly during the afternoon and evening hours. Visibility was generally poor prior to 0700 hours, due to morning ground fog. Ceilings were approximately 200 to 2500 feet, lowering to 500 feet during heavy rains.

(2) Terrain: The area of operations was astride National Route 15. The route traverses a sparsely settled alluvial plain from Bien Hoa City to Phu My. The route south of Phu My frequently passes through or adjacent to mangrove swamps. West of Route 15, the terrain is generally open, whereas the area east of the route is generally wooded. Three hill masses, Nui Dinh (YS 334653), elevation 491 meters; Nui Thi Vai (YS 284712), elevation 467 meters, and Nui Toc Tien (YS 309705), elevation 423 meters, dominate Route 15 and afford observation of Route from Vung Tau to Phu My.

12. Concept of Operation: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) accomplished its mission of protecting convoys moving on Highway 15 in sector by operating in 3 phases:

a. Phase I:

(1) TF 1/503d Inf moved by vehicle along Route Orange, on 10 October 1966, and out posted Highway 15 from YS 190855 to YS 253744.

(2) 1st squadron, 11th ACR moved by vehicle on 10 October 1966 and out posted Highway 15 from YS 145984 to YS 190855.

b. Phase II:

(1) TF 1/503d Inf conducted security operations along Highway 15 from 11 to 16 October 1966.

(2) 1st squadron, 11th ACR conducted operations to secure Highway 15 from 11 to 16 October 1966.

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(3) C/2/503d Inf was flown to Position Hawk to secure the Brigade CP.

**13. Execution:**

D - Day (10 October 1966)

a. The 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) commenced Operation "Robin" astride Highway 15, between Bear Cat (YT 155015) and Phu My (YS 264745). TF 1/ 503d Inf departed Bien Hoa at 1000 hours, moving by road and closed into the area of operation (AO) at 1146 hours, without incident. Their CP was at YS 224810.

TF HHC departed Bien Hoa at 1115 hours and closed to Position Hawk (YS 171868) at 1325 hours without incident. The Brigade CP became operational at 1530 hours.

TF 1/11th ACR departed Long Binh at 1306 hours and closed into their AO at 1350 hours. At 2040 hours, C/1/11th ACR heard noise in their front at YS 128943. When they fired illumination, they observed personnel to their front and received 5 rounds of s/a fire with negative results. They returned fire with negative VC casualties. At 2055 hours, C/1/11th ACR received six (6) rounds of a/w fire at YS 125972 with no results.

D + 1 (11 October 1966)

b. The 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) continued Operation "Robin" astride Highway 15 from Bear Cat to Phu My. TF 1/503d Inf maintained security in zone. TF 1/11th ACR, securing its zone, cleared a road block at 1245 hours at YS 160960. At 1315 hours, the 1/11th ACR received two rounds of s/a fire from YS 148908 with no casualties sustained. At 1855 hours, 1/11th ACR observed 4 rounds of mortar fire, a/w fire and a grenade explosion at a village located at YT 012158.

C/2/503d Infantry conducted a helilift into AO "Robin", closing at Position Hawk at 1006 hours. C/2/503d Inf became the Brigade Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) and defended the Brigade CP at night.

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C/2/35th Artillery (155mm SP) closed by road convoy on Position Hawk at 1100 hours. E/17th Cavalry participated in the defense of Position Hawk.

D + 2 (12 October 1966)

c. Operation Robin continued on Highway 15 south of Bear Cat (YT 110-810). 1/503d Inf continued to secure Highway 15 in zone. 1/11th ACR continued security of Highway 15 in zone. Between 0612 hours and 0712 hours, B Troop, 1/11th ACR received sniper fire, fire was returned with negative results. There were no US casualties.

E/17th Cav participated in the defense of Position Hawk. During the day there were no significant contacts.

D + 3 (13 October 1966)

d. The 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) continued Operation "Robin" and continued to secure Highway 15 from Bear Cat to Phu My. The 1/503d Inf made no contact in its sector.

TF 1/11th ACR secured its sector and moved its B Troop on a company size search and destroy mission within the AO near the village of Binh Son (YS 215937). At 0715 hours, B/1/11th ACR apprehended 2 VCS at YS 217932, who they turned over to local authorities at Long Thanh. At 1130 hours, B/1/11th ACR received fire from 3 VC near YS 260924. Fire was returned with no casualties on either side. At 1400 hours, B/1/11th ACR located and destroyed 8 bunkers and 8 huts at YS 258933.

C/2/503d Inf remained at position Hawk. Elements of E/17th Cav made contact with 4 VC at YS 232854 resulting in 2 VC KIA (nooss) with no US casualties. At 1425 hours, a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ton truck of the Brigade S5 Section hit by a command detonated claymore mine at YS 163855, killing all 4 occupants. Fire was returned with negative results.

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D + 4 (14 October 1966)

e. The 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) continued to conduct Operation "Robin" to cover the movement of the 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division from Vung Tau to Bear Cat. The 1/503d Inf and the 1/11th ACR secured Highway 15 in their assigned sectors. C/2/503d Infantry continued as Brigade RRF. moving under the cover of darkness, 2 platoons of C/2/503d Inf surrounded the village at YS 164855 at 140300H October 1966. 43 suspects were detained but all were released.

D + 5 (15 October 1966)

f. The 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) continued its security operation of Highway 15 between Bear Cat and Phu My. The 1/503d Inf continued to secure Highway 15 in sector. At 0907 hours, a platoon of A/1/503d Inf was hel-lifted to a patrol area at YS 225860 and returned at 1450 hours without incident.

The 1/11th ACR continued to secure Route 15 in their assigned sector with A/1/11th ACR conducting a search and destroy operation northwest of Binh Son (YS 2194) without incident. E/17th Cav secured the fire support base (FSB) of the Brigade CP at Position Hawk along with C/2/503d Inf.

D + 6 (16 October 1966)

g. The 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) continued Operation "Robin" south of Bear Cat astride Highway 15 without incident.

D + 7 (17 October 1966)

h. The 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) terminated Operation "Robin" at 1359 hours. 1/503d Inf closed back into Bien Hoa at 1818 hours, HHC closed back into Bien Hoa at 1100 hours. 1/11th ACR returned to Long Binh base camp closing at 1359 hours.

C/2/503d Inf was airlifted from the "Robin" AO and closed at Bien Hoa at 1010 hours. The MP platoon escorted C/2/35th Arty to Xuan Loc and closed at Bien Hoa at 1053 hours.

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## **14. Administrative Matters:**

a. General: Brigade elements deployed on Operation "Robin" were resupplied from Bien Hoa base camp. No Brigade Supply Office (BSO) representatives were present at the field location.

b. Supply and Transportation: Resupply of the Brigade was accomplished by road convoy each day from the BSO to the using unit. The 173d Support Battalion furnished all classes of supplies. A total of 5 resupply convoys were made, furnishing the following supplies:

(1) Class I . . . . .	30.4 tons
(2) Class II & IV . . . . .	.75 tons
(3) Class III . . . . .	8.8 tons
(4) Class IIIA . . . . .	19.2 tons
(5) Class V . . . . .	.2 tons

c. Maintenance: Small detachment of maintenance personnel from HHC, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) furnished maintenance for vehicles located at Position Hawk. Vehicles and equipment beyond second Echelon repair were evacuated by Highway. Vehicles and equipment totaled two (2) 1/4 ton jeeps, one (1) 3/4 ton truck, and one (1) 1/4 ton USARV Psy Ops Jeep.

d. Medical: Co B Medical provided primary evacuation facility at base camp. Dustoff evacuation ship remained forward during daylight hours and at the Brigade Rear Clearing Station at night.

## **15. Civic Action/ Psychological Operations:**

a. During Operation "Robin", the S5 Section centered its activities in the following areas:

(1) Ba Ky . . . . .	YS 163855
(2) Long An . . . . .	YS 148898
(3) Soui Ca . . . . .	YS 182865
(4) Cau Go . . . . .	YS 170870

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b. Operation Robin lasted for a period of one week. The following resultant totals of S-5 activities:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>MEDCAP</u>	
11 Oct 66	Soui Ca	YS 182865	50
11 Oct 66	Cau Go	YS 170870	55
11 Oct 66	Tam Phouc	YS 197846	27
12 Oct 66	Ba Ky	YS 163855	66
12 Oct 66	Tam Thien	YS 210285	20
13 Oct 66	Long An	YS 148898	90
13 Oct 66	Thai Thien	YS 148797	75
14 Oct 66	Ba Ky	YS 163855	30
14 Oct 66	Soui Ca	YS 182865	60
15 Oct 66	Long An	YS 148898	43
15 Oct 66	Cau Go	YS 170870	28
16 Oct 66	Soui Ca	YS 182865	30
16 Oct 66	Phu My	YS 253746	—
			TOTAL . . . . . 554

c. Psychological Operations: The Psy Ops team was used in conjunction with our MEDCAP team. Reward, Safe Conduct, and 173d leaflets and JUSPAO posters were distributed at each MEDCAP site; approximately 2,000 posters were distributed. The following distributions were made:

- (1) Cooking Oil (cases) . . . . . 8
- (2) Beans (cases) . . . . . 15
- (3) Clothing (200 lb bales) . . . . . 4
- (4) Soap (cases - 1,000 bars ea) . . . . . 9
- (5) Soap Powder (cases) . . . . . 20
- (6) Rice (bags) . . . . . 46
- (7) Sewing Kits . . . . . 200

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d. The Brigade Civic Action effort was comprised by teams from the 1/503d Inf, 1/11th ACR, and the S-5 team. The attached Vietnamese Civil Affairs team was used by the 1/503d Inf on the 11th, 12th and 13th of October and then became a part of the Brigade team. Additionally the Psychological Operations team was augmented with an Audio Visual team and vehicle from the 246th Psy Ops Company. To prevent a duplication of effort by the Civic Action Team, the 1/11th ACR took the northern third of the AO, the Brigade S-5 took the central part, and the 1/503d Inf took the southern portion. The Psy Ops and Audio Visual teams, attached to the S-5 from the 246th Psy Ops Company were used in conjunction with the S-5 MEDCAP teams. Broadcasting by the Audio-Visual team was conducted while the Psy Ops team distributed leaflets which consisted of: Reward, Safe Conduct, and 173d Power Leaflets.

e. At 1415 hours, 13 October 1966, the S-5 Civic Action team and Psy Ops team were ambushed by a VC force which resulted in 4 US KIA's. This included two officers from the S-5 section and one NCO and driver from attached 246th Psy Ops Company team.

16. Results of Operation "Robin" are as Follows:

US Losses:Personnel:

1/11th ACR: No Losses

Brigade Losses:

KIA . . . . . 4

WIA . . . . . 0

MIA . . . . . 0

Equipment:

1/11th ACR: No Losses

Brigade Losses: No Losses

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## **VC Losses**

### Personnel:

KIA (Posa)	2
VCC	0
VCS	2

Weapons: No Losses

### Ammunition:

60mm Rounds	1
Rifle Grenade	1
US Claymore Mine	1

Transportation: No Losses

### Food:

Rice (lb)	1
-----------	---

### Structures:

Bunkers	8
Huts	8

## 17. Commander's Analysis and Lessons Learned:

a. Commander's Analysis: The mission of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) during this operation was the security of Highway 15 for the passage of the 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division into its base at Bear Cat. This mission was accomplished and in no case was VC activity able to hinder the operation. Damage to the enemy was negligible due to the lack of contact in the AO. However, the show of force along Highway 15 guaranteed the free flow of traffic of both military and Civilians impressing the ARVN and the Civilians in the area.

### b. Lessons Learned:

Item: Coordination and Dissemination of IRRP Information.

Discussion: Since the IRRP's worked in the AO's of the battalions during this operation, the need became apparent that constant information of

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the LRRP's location and activities must be supplied to the battalions. This is also true of the intelligence gathered by LRRP's.

Observation: The battalions should keep a radio on the LRRP's frequency to monitor their actions and the Brigade S-2 should keep battalions posted as to the location and activity of LRRP's in the battalions AO.

Item: Pursuit of Enemy Security

Discussion: On occasions, when personnel are wounded or killed by sniper or command detonated claymores, personnel in the same party or element immediately tend to the wounded, disregarding the enemy. This is dangerous and unprofitable.

Observation: Personnel must insure that an area is secure before tending to wounded and in many cases the best way to do this is to pursue the enemy and destroy him and then treat the wounded.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



E. B. ROBERSON  
CPT, AGC  
Asst AG

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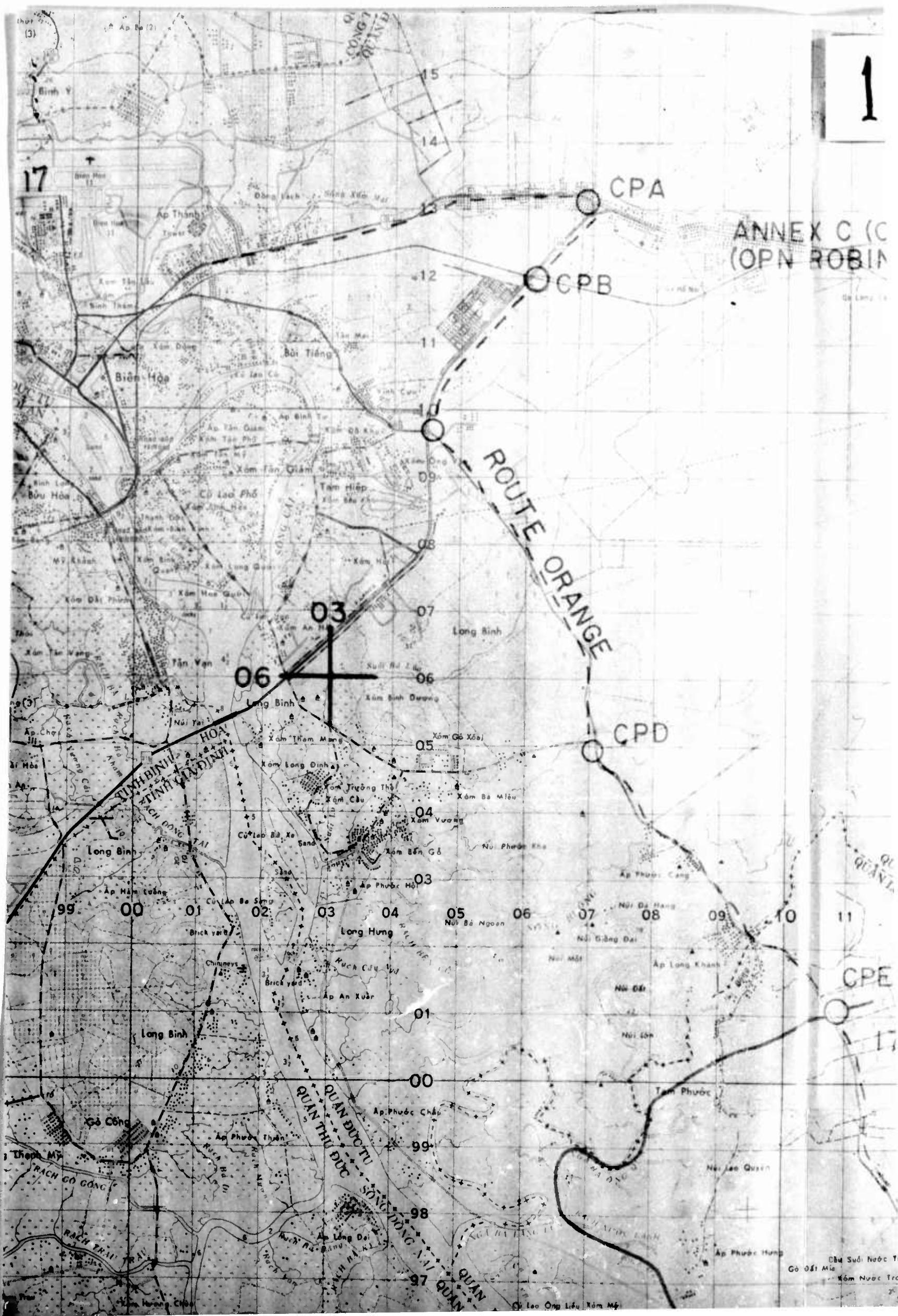
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"ROBIN"

ANNEX C - Operations Overlay - 9 October 1966

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APPENDIX C (OP OVERLAY) to OPORD-20-66  
PN ROBIN) (U)

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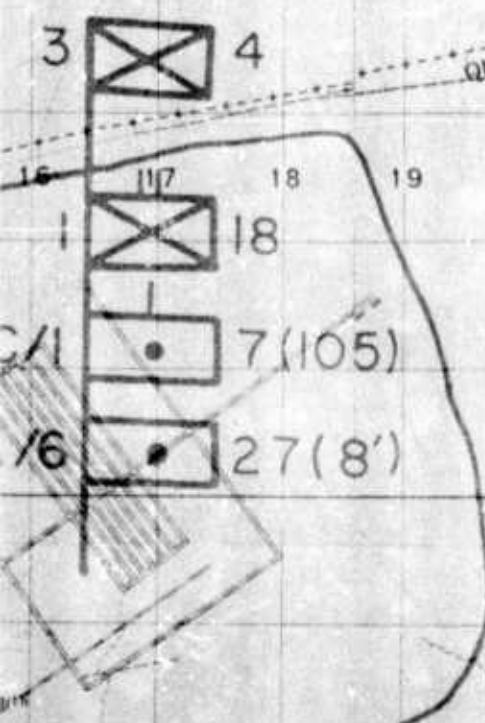


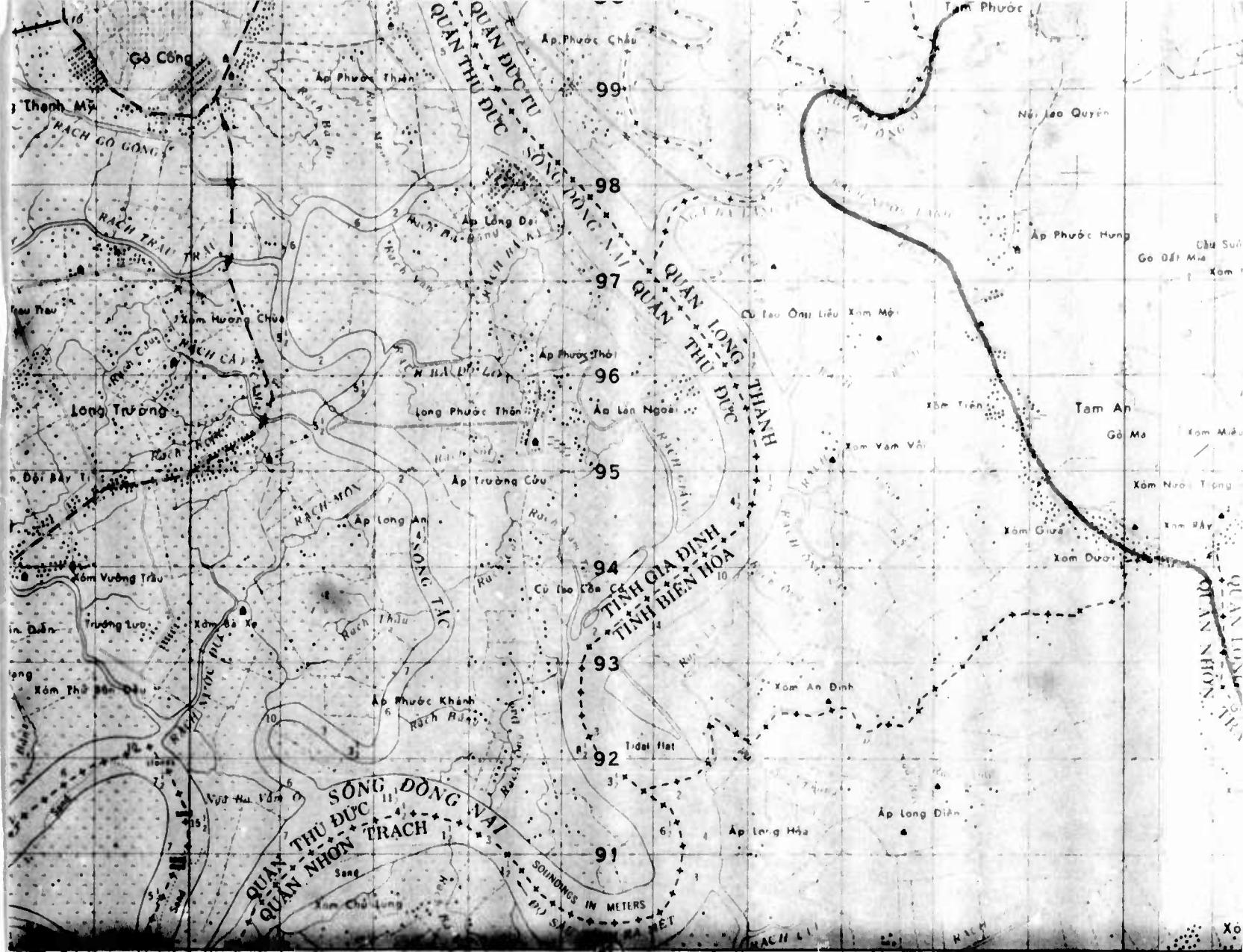
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